

# MCC Peace Section Task Force on Women in Church & Society REPORT

Report #35. January-February 1981

## Focus on Women and Militarism

As this issue of the **Report** goes to press, it is not yet clear whether or not, for the first time in United States history, women will be required to register for the draft. Regardless of what happens, it is timely to take a look at the issues of war and peace and how women are affected by and affect them. I can remember a time when young Mennonite women were told that their role was to support the young men who decided to perform alternate service rather than join the army. Today, some of the daughters of those women are trying to decide whether they will register should they be required to do so. Other Mennonite women as well as men are engaged in witnessing against militarism by refusing to pay the portion of their income tax that funds military defense, and witnessing at the Pentagon and Rocky Flats. Some women are taking very seriously the tasks of raising children non-violently and teaching children values of peace and justice. Others minister to those who are the

victims of American militarism both here and abroad.

This **Report** begins with an article which looks at the contributions that values usually associated with women's experience could make to a more peaceful world. Next, Beverly Bowen Lord shows how in the United States women are often the victims of government priority for military spending. Marilyn Klaus points out that reasons some people give for opposing the drafting of women could just as well be used against drafting men. Connie Kreider tells how women who choose the soldier role are often victimized within the military in spite of glowing promises. In the final article Winifred Beechy gives us the perspective of another culture by describing how Chinese women with some success, used their participation in the war effort as fighters and food producers to demonstrate their worth and capabilities to men.—*Janet Umble Reedy*

## Sexual Equality and Peace

*Janet Umble Reedy*

"Women look at a nation run by a male executive branch, a male Congress, a male Pentagon, and male corporations and banks, and they rightly ask: Would we, if we shared equally with men the authority of government, condone the spending of more than a trillion dollars in the past twenty-five years for killing and useless missiles when our cities are dying of neglect—when families go homeless and hungry—when our young people are becoming more and more alienated from a society they regard as without soul or purpose? I think not."

This quotation, attributed to Bella Abzug, former U.S. Congressperson, always stirs me and makes me want to say, "That's right!" But if I am honest, I have to wonder how much difference the presence of women in positions of power would make.

We don't have much experience that helps us answer that question. According to Lionel Tiger, in most countries five percent is the maximum percentage of women in parliaments. The few women prime ministers we

have seen in our time have not been notably peaceful. Some observers believe that women are potentially just as violent as men, and the only reason that women are not likely to be violent criminals is that until now they have not had the chance. Studies by Margaret Mead show that women are just as fierce as men in self-defense. Tiger distinguishes between fighting to defend one's home and family and organized aggressive activity. Apparently when women fight, it is more likely to be in self-defense.

Public opinion polls show that American women are less likely than men to support military solutions, all the way from World War I to Vietnam. They are more likely to oppose capital punishment, support gun control, and oppose the use of violence. A friend of mine talked to a number of young women accompanying boyfriends who were registering for the draft last July at our local post office. Her sample seven women all said that should women be required to register, they would refuse; they would never agree to fight. While we do not

*The MCC Peace Section Task Force on Women in Church and Society (formed in 1973) believes that Christ Jesus teaches equality of all persons. It strives to promote this belief through sharing information, concerns, and ideas relating to problems and issues which affect the status of women in church and society.*

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know what they would do if they were actually called upon, the unanimity and vehemence of their reaction tells us something about how women see themselves in relation to violence.

### **A Voice from South Africa**

Olive Schreiner, a South African pacifist and feminist in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, believed that women have always borne the heaviest brunt of war. Women, just as men, have seen their fields and houses destroyed; women have done their own work as well as the men's work when the men went off to war; women, too, have lost their lives in war. In addition, while men are making the weapons with which to fight the war, women, in their own bodies, are making the men who destroy and are destroyed in the war. A woman looks at the war dead and grieves for all the mothers' sons because she knows at what great cost that life, so carelessly wasted, was brought into the world and nurtured. Because women give life at such cost to themselves, they understand the true value of human life in a way that men cannot. Thus, Schreiner believed that women have the responsibility to educate humankind to see clearly the value of human life and the insanity of war, and to point the way to arbitration for solving conflicts.

Schreiner is not the only person who has called on women as givers of life and nurturers of dependent life to stop war and preserve life. Time and again, women have responded to this call and been in the forefront of those working for peace. Reformers of an earlier era believed that women would do this because they are morally superior to men. While that conviction is not supported by facts, by looking at the kinds of roles women traditionally have played, we can see some reasons why they are less likely to advocate violence. There are some things that men could learn and which we may hope that women, in assuming roles with more public responsibility, will not forget.

### **Results of Hierarchy**

The women's movement has made an important contribution to peace by helping us understand how a rigid polarization of roles which rewards men for domination and women for being passive leads to violence. The patriarchal style of leadership with which most people in our society are most familiar depends on hierarchal relationships in which one person's superior power and recognized ability to use force to enforce his (or sometimes her) will, enables him/her to dominate another. It is the model which determines the balance of power among nations and which lies behind our country's militarism. If we want our nation to be #1 (and few people in the United States question the desirability of that), and because the ability to dominate comes from superior military power, then obviously we must have more weapons than any other nations.

Women are more often the victims in hierarchal relationships because their physical power and access to resources is often not equal to men's. Women can see the connection between patriarchy and the violence-destruction-war complex more clearly because as its victims they have less to gain from it. Women do sometimes perpetuate the destructiveness of patri-

archy by submitting to it willingly or by dominating those who are weaker than they are—their children; but women are also able to see the violence inherent in patriarchy more clearly because willingness to use force is not a test of womanhood in the way that it is a test of manhood. Women who relate to others in a style that emphasizes mutuality and cooperation do not run the risk of being called cowards. Thus, they are more free to risk the vulnerability that cooperation requires.

### **Dominance and Nurturance**

Elise Boulding describes how women's role as the bearer of children has led to them being cast as the primary caretakers of children. This gender-based division of responsibility has led to a separate women's culture which varies in particulars across time and place, but is always characterized by nurturing. As a result, men and women have separate and only minimally related stocks of knowledge. Each is incapable of fully understanding and utilizing the knowledge of the other. There are two styles of social interaction—the one based on dominance and authority, which is characteristic of the male experience and is used in the public world in which policy decisions are made. The other, based on nurturance, is characteristic of the female world, and is confined primarily to private settings. As a result, women's knowledge and experience is degraded and trivialized as having value only in the private world of the family. Man's public role is elevated as being the worthwhile one to which all (males) should aspire.

As a result of their experience in caring for children, women have what Boulding calls the "extraordinary apprenticeship" to the newborn infant where they learn to read a set of non-verbal signals no longer available in the adult world. Those who care for children develop skills of attunement to the child's needs and skills of interaction. Being a parent means helping another human being move from a state of complete dependence to being able to care for him/herself as well as for a new generation of dependent persons. In childrearing the balance of power is constantly changing between the nurtured and the nurturer. One cannot go through that process without learning a great deal through trial and error about caring, listening, taking the other's needs seriously, and working out a mutually satisfying balance.

Because women are seen primarily as childbearers, they are considered as providing an important maintenance function to society, but are not valued as true participants in the social order itself. Parenting is seen as an extension of reproduction rather than as a vital part of a continuous re-shaping of the social order.

### **A Call to New Solutions**

By separating authority and nurturance, the social-learning capacity of society, its ability to adapt to new ways of doing things when the old ones no longer serve their purpose, is impeded. It is easier to rely on force to bring about needed change. Nurturance creates an accepting unthreatening atmosphere where one can risk openness to new solutions and the possibility of making mistakes in the process of learning new skills.

The task for the future is to bring nurturance into the public domain, fostering settings and styles of inter-

actions and rules for mediating conflicts of interests which release the most positive, creative and mutually affirming responses in all participants. This will mean gaining public legitimization for the knowledge and skills women have developed in family and neighborhood settings and helping men master that same knowledge so that they can use it in the public sphere. We must link the public and private worlds; men and women must share with each other the benefits of the experience that each have had. It must be clear that we are not talking about skills that any individual man does not or woman does possess, but the different styles that have become characteristic of men and

women, growing up with different expectations and roles in our culture.

If men and women shared the authority of government equally, to use Bella Abzug's imagery, or if the nurturance skills that women possess were valued in the public domain, then military and human service priorities could be radically altered. Olive Schreiner understood many years ago that for a complete human wisdom to exist, woman (the bearer of the race) and man (the begetter) must stand side by side as equals.

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## Women and the Social Costs of Militarism

*Beverly Bowen Lord*

One of my favorite political buttons is the one that says "Feed the Cities, Not the Pentagon." The message implied is one accepted by most of us—the more money invested in military programs, the less there is available to be invested in needy areas of human services.

The debate over whether the public or private sector should be the source of funds for social programs has been highlighted in the recent political campaigns. There is little doubt that the federal government will continue to provide a greater part of such resources, but many of us have genuine concerns about the commitments to major cutbacks in social spending made by U.S. President-elect Reagan.

The 1 December 1980 *Newsweek* contains some projections on the new administration's directions. In the area of defense a new manned bomber, deployment of sophisticated neutron warheads in Europe, strengthening the Minuteman missile system, and development of the multibillion-dollar MX mobile missile system will all be on the priority agenda, while careful attention is being given to "cutting the fat" out of health, environment, education, housing and welfare programs. The Comprehensive Employment Training Program, the source of thousands of local public-service jobs, will probably be eliminated, and comprehensive changes are being proposed in the social security system.

This is serious business for women in the United States. Two thirds of the population over 65 years of age in this country are women, and they are the poorest of the elderly. Two thirds of the minimum wage earners in this country are women. Women are more dependent upon day care programs, medical insurance, job training and other federally funded human service programs than are men. It is essential that we take seriously the allocation of the federal dollars, provided by us, the taxpayers, and provide as much input, direction and pressure as possible on how priorities should be aligned.

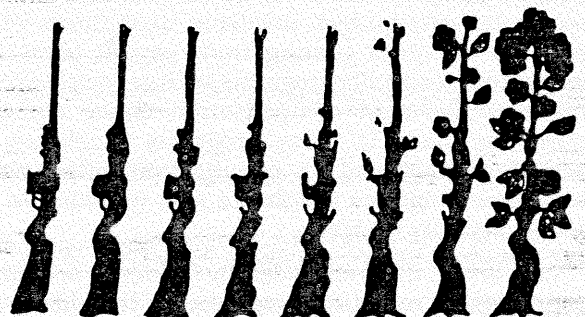
How does the ever increasing military budget actually affect spending on social programs? I make no false claims of expertise on matters such as the complex

federal budget process. I thank Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, and Claire Gorfinkel specifically, for compiling the booklet entitled *Women and the Federal Budget* from which the following information is summarized. It is a very helpful resource in understandable language which deserves further study. The June 1980 edition gives detailed information on where and why our money went this past year.

The proposed military budget for 1980 exceeded not only the previous year's budget, but also the cost of inflation. The increase in military spending was greater than for any other federal program.

Unlike most other sections of the budget, military expenditures undergo little scrutiny during the budget process. After rather perfunctory discussion on what is essential to our defense, Pentagon requests are usually accepted. Experts outside government agree that based on careful analysis, defense spending could be cut by 40 percent without diminishing national security. In spite of a variety of qualified studies of this type, military spending continues to rise, while human services spending is severely cut back.

One place to begin looking more specifically at the effect of military priorities over people priorities is in the area of health care. A program of particular relevance to women is the Medicaid program, since 65 percent of its recipients are women. The increase in funding from the 1979 to 1980 budget meant only an additional \$12 per person served; hardly enough to meet the increasing cost of services. It must also be





noted that this increase was also to cover a number of new programs including the Child Health and Assessment Program as well as coverage for 100,000 low-income pregnant women.

In order to fund these new programs, proposals for saving several million dollars included cost-saving measures such as reducing errors in bill processing and payments to ineligible beneficiaries as well as restricting compensation for radiologists, pathologists and anesthesiologists and eliminating payments for chiropractors. So while health programs are subject to very close scrutiny in order to cut costs, cost over-runs have become the norm in military spending.

After Medicare and Medicaid, \$9.1 billion was proposed to pay for all other health care programs. Only \$3.4 billion was provided for health research. The Army's proposed outlay (the amount to be spent in a given year) for ammunition in peacetime was \$999 million, while the proposed outlay for cancer research was \$899 million.

Budget authority (the amount to be spent on an entire program over several years) of \$579 million was provided for education and training of the health care work force. The Nurses Training Act granted financial assistance to 40,000 nursing students (most from low income families) in 1978. The 1980 budget proposed slashing outlays for nurses' training from \$126 million to \$15 million.

Another budget category of special importance to women is the employment budget. Women comprise about 40 percent of paid workers. A vast majority of these working women are concentrated in low-paying service and sales jobs. In order to secure well-paying permanent employment, women especially need job training and placement programs. In spite of clear evidence of the success of several federally funded programs, the 1980 budget proposed reducing budget authority for training and employment by 13 percent.

CETA, the program due to get the axe from the new administration, includes some specific assistance for women. CETA Title III contains special national programs for population groups who face particular employment disadvantages, such as displaced homemakers. The 1980 budget proposed outlays 35 percent less than the 1979 budget, from \$629 million to \$404 million, of which \$5 million was earmarked for displaced homemakers. By contrast, the Navy was scheduled to spend more than \$800 million solely for the purchase of ballistic missiles.

A third category crucial to the needs of women is the income security budget, involving trust funds which are fixed amounts coming from payroll taxes and designated for specific programs such as social security and unemployment compensation. Since cutbacks cannot be made in these programs which pay for themselves, they end up coming from other public assistance programs which are also included in the income security budget.

There are 15 different federally funded school lunch programs and nutrition programs for the elderly and

other needy people in this budget category. The 1980 budget reduced outlays for school lunches by redirecting services to "more needy" children. In 1980 the government anticipated outlays of \$3,899 million for school lunch and other nutrition programs. By contrast the Air Force was to spend more than twice that amount solely for the purchase and maintenance of its aircraft.

Housing assistance, also a part of the income security budget, suffered cut backs in the 1980 budget proposals. Significant numbers of single parent households, typically headed by mothers, are served by public housing programs, low income housing assistance, and homeowner's assistance.

The amount of our tax dollars spent on assisting those in need is indeed related to the amount spent on national defense. But, none of us is so naive to assume that the task of redirecting these priorities is a simple one. As Naomi Marcus points out in "Arms and the Woman" (a WILPF discussion paper), "Even if substantial cuts were made in military spending, the funds released would not automatically be used for social programs. Many government spokespeople have made it clear that they view social spending with horror and dread." The 1980 election victories indicate even stronger support for this mentality.

The women's movement has been a powerful political force at various points in United States history. Some of the now-legendary figures in the women's movement in the early part of the 20th century were leading peace activists—Jane Addams, for one. On an issue of such importance to women as militarism versus human services, it is imperative that we join together to use that force again. Groups such as Women's International League for Peace and Freedom provide the base around which to organize the necessary support.

Marcus puts it well. "To have any hope of a real and lasting change, women must work in alliance with other exploited people in this country—including minorities, organized and unorganized workers, and the unemployed. And, most important, we all must demand not only cuts in the military budget to release funds for social programs, but we must also demand a restructuring of the economic system so that people's needs come before profit" (December 1980).

*Beverly Bowen Lord is head resident at a Goshen College residence hall*

If equal rights mean an equal obligation to blow other peoples' brains out, then we've made a mistake. Equal rights do mean equal obligations. The core of that truth is a demand that we get on with the business of insuring all people an equal chance at building a peaceful world. Our responsibility is to **complain**, scream, holler and shout everytime that is contradicted. This is not a women's issue. This is an issue about everyone's hopes and dreams for a future. This is an issue that threatens all of us—from my 19-year-old sister to my two-month-old god-child, to you and me. It is an issue that demands we protect any one of us from becoming a victim.—*Debbie Garvey, Los Angeles Catholic Worker.*

## Some Behavioral Objectives for Women of Peace

by Sara Wengert

A woman desiring to be a peacemaker will recognize that peacemaking is not easy. It is likely to involve sacrifice and the reordering of her priorities. She will understand that Christian peacemaking grows out of a commitment to Christ and His teaching; that for Jesus, being a loving person cost Him His life. She will demonstrate her awareness that personal preparation and growth are essential for her own peacemaking by nourishing her soul with daily Bible study and prayer; accepting herself whether married, single, widowed, or divorced by realizing that personal worth is not dependent on marital status; assessing her own strengths and weaknesses; staying in touch with her own needs and emotions; establishing some close friendships for purposes of support and encouragement; accepting her talents and developing them; reading about peace and peacemakers.

She will understand that the biblical concept of shalom encompasses all of life. Peace is living in wholeness, a total sense of well-being. She will begin her task of peacemaking in her own home by staying finely tuned to the feelings of her family; taking the initiative to talk about conflict; refusing to use her anger to hurt others; showing as much interest in the satisfaction and security of those she loves as she does in her own; welcoming opportunities to discuss the

biblical basis for peacemaking with non-Christians or Christians who condone war and resistance.

In her country and the world she will recognize that human relationships transcend national boundaries. She will demonstrate her belief in the community of all people by recognizing and acknowledging the mistakes of her own government; admitting that her own lifestyle may contribute to unjust government policies; living more simply so that more of the world's resources are left for others; praying for leaders of governments; recognizing the inconsistency of "praying for peace and paying for war." Within the context of her Christian fellowship, she will examine closely the "War Tax" issue and discern which action is the faithful response for her and her family; becoming personally acquainted with people of other races and nationalities; communicating her concerns to government leaders by letter, telephone, or personal visit; becoming informed about issues which either endanger or enhance human life, e.g., nuclear arms race, abortion, women's rights, poverty, and child abuse; giving at least a tithe of the family income to her church and supporting its work with her prayers; acknowledging that personal involvement in the needs of people is most effective by volunteering for the relief and mission programs of her church.

—WMSC Voice, December 1980

## The Draft and Women

by Marilyn Klaus

On 8 February 1980, United States President Jimmy Carter announced a proposal to register women along with men for a possible military draft. One does not know whether Carter was simply trying to appease both Right and Left by calling for military preparedness while considering both sexes in his proposal; but whatever his motivation, before Congress made it a men-only affair, opposition came in from both Right and Left, from both men and women, from both pro- and anti-ERA forces.

Take, for example, the eight Pentecostal ministers who marched into Senator Nancy Kassebaum's office declaring the drafting of women to be anti-God and anti-family. Including women in a military draft would, they argued, "rot the moral fiber of America." Phyllis Schlafly, national chair of Stop ERA, accused Carter of "stabbing American womanhood in the back."

Spokesmen for the Amish claimed that Amish women would sit in jail before they would register for the draft.

Feminists Gloria Steinem, Bella Abzug, and Representative Patricia Schroeder (Democrat-Colorado) along with the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom came out against the registration of anyone, female or male. Their position was misunderstood to mean that these feminists and feminist orga-

nizations were crying "wait a minute" on equal rights. They were accused of being hypocrites, supporting equal rights only on popular issues. Anti-ERA forces have always used the possibility of the draft as an argument against the passage of the amendment. Such accusations may have prompted the National Organization for Women (NOW), while opposing the draft for both men and women, to issue a long press release saying "If there is to be a registration or draft, it must include women." The National Women's Political Caucus issued an almost identical statement. For feminists-pacifists, it is a Catch-22 question.

Perhaps we can learn from the fact that the world almost universally abhors the idea of sending women into a combat zone. Despite the fact that the presumptions are sexist—women cannot be soldiers because they belong at home, they are too weak, they are too emotional, they should not have positions of authority, they are not to lead men, etc.—could it not be argued that if sending women off to fight is anti-God that sending men off to fight is equally anti-God? Is not losing a father as anti-family as losing a mother? Is not forcing a man to take the life of another man a "stab in the back of manhood"?

On the one hand, the institution of registration exists, and the exclusion of women from the process is



just another indication of sexism in our society. Statistics show that on the average women soldiers are more intelligent than men soldiers. They have attained a higher education; they have fewer discipline problems; they are cheaper to recruit; they are cheaper to maintain. On the other hand, the system that intends to teach one how to kill another does not merit the participation of **anyone**, therefore, including men in such a system is a greater evil than the sexism of the system. War is a product of destructive patriarchal societies. There is hope in the belief that it is immoral to place women in combat; would that the day were here when it is equally immoral to place men in combat!

The issue may be decided on just that line of reasoning. The constitutionality of including only men in a draft registration began last July, a three judge panel in the Third Circuit Court in Philadelphia ruled it unconstitutional! In effect, the court was recognizing men's rights! Under the equal protection clause of the Fifth Amendment, all Americans are granted the right of equal protection under the law.

The case was first brought before the Circuit Court during the Vietnam conflict. At that time the male defendants claimed it unconstitutional to ask them to

register without asking women to register. Because the draft ended shortly afterwards, the case was dropped only to be resurrected last July.

In order to be able to go on with the planned registration, the case had to be appealed to a higher court, that being the Supreme Court of the United States. It is now up to the Supreme Court to give the final word. The nine justices have recently decided in favor of complete equality of men and women, in equal pay for equal work; unless the registration of women can be shown to be a "detriment to national security," the Supreme Court is expected to decide in favor of registering women. A decision is not expected until spring 1981, so we wait.

Perhaps women are on the verge of an opportunity of standing up to an unjust and destructive system. Are we willing to join our Amish sisters in jail? Are we willing to support our draft-aged sisters, daughters, nieces in a tough decision? Perhaps women are on the forefront of a new movement that will expose once and for all the absurdity of war.

*Marilyn Klaus is youth pastor at Bethel College Mennonite Church, North Newton, Kan.*

## Countering Militarism in the Schools

by Connie Kreider

Military recruiting activity has increased since the advent of the all volunteer army. In 1977, \$600 million of our tax dollars were spent to portray a positive image of the military to youth through local advertising testing programs, reserve recruiting, Junior ROTC, promotional bands and performing groups. In staffing terms, there is one person assigned to military recruiting for every 9.4 members of the enlistable pool of qualified 18-year-old males.

The armed forces regard the nation's education system as the primary arena for military recruitment. The assumption behind this is that schools provide easy and convenient access to young people of formative age as well as carrying the weight of tradition in disseminating information. The military might be involved in the school system where you live. Look for recruiters present at career day, military ads in the school newspaper, requests for students' names and addresses and referrals; military aptitude testing; assistant student recruiters; military presentations at assemblies and classes; school counselors whose aid has been enlisted via booths, movies and promotional give away items at state level counselors' meetings.

Whether or not the drafting of women becomes a reality, the fact is that recruiters presently expect women to fill the gaps made by diminishing male enlistments in the all volunteer army. Under pressure to meet quotas, recruiters make false promises and misrepresent information. Once the enlistment contract is signed, the enlistee has little if any recourse against such malpractice. High school youth need

access to the practical, factual realities which dispel the myths the military seeks to perpetuate as well as access to Christ-centered approaches to solving world conflicts.

**Myth:** In the military, women receive equal pay for equal work.

**Fact:** Two-thirds of the women in the armed forces are still in traditional medical and secretarial fields. A 1977 Pentagon study says the average woman in the military is brighter, better educated and less likely to become a disciplinary problem. Nevertheless, Army statistics show that as the pay grade goes up, the percentage of women compared to the percentage of men goes down. Women usually do not reach as high a rank as men according to Navy statistics. In fact, a Pentagon study said there is no reason to study women officers because there are enough men to be officers.

**Myth:** The military will teach you valuable skills.

**Fact:** Eighty percent of the military jobs are in areas that account for only 10 percent of the civilian work force. The skill learned might be useless upon discharge. Enlistees take a series of tests to see if they can enlist but after they've been sworn in they take another series of tests. If they do poorly on the second tests, they may find that their "promises" for training are cancelled. Ninety percent of male and female army enlistees who had applied for college course work were repeatedly turned down by their unit commanders. Even if you are trained in a field, it doesn't necessarily mean assignment in that field. The Air Force might give

a woman training in electronics but assign her to the typing pool.

**Myth:** You will be able to travel... "see the world."

**Fact:** Enlistees might be stationed in Europe or elsewhere but will be hit by the declining value of the dollar and an inability to speak the language. Enlistees run up against the fact that they represent capitalistic militarism to which many people in the country in which they are stationed are opposed. They frequently encounter "Off Limits to GIs" signs.

**Myth:** The Armed Forces respects women's rights.

**Fact:** A military *Times Magazine* says, "Rape is one of the fastest growing crimes in the military community." An Air Force legal officer adds, "Unless the guy had a weapon or we have photographs of serious injuries, it looks like the victim consented." The Air Force did a rating among airmen of the importance of 15 contemporary problems. Women's rights was rated least important.

**Myth:** You can combine a military career with marriage and children.

**Fact:** There is no guarantee, even if a recruiter promises, that married enlisted couples may stay together. The army has told commanders to "get tough" with parents absent from duty because of "parenthood problems." Although pregnant women can usually stay in the army, the army has asked the Pentagon to change this policy. Military life is stressful. Psychiatric hospitalization of Navy women is 44 times the civilian rate according to the September 1974 issue of *Army Times*.

**Myth:** When women have "equality" in the military and can serve in combat, they will at last have achieved liberation.

**Fact:** When people face discrimination, they often try to become equal by becoming like their oppressors. Three women (one a conscientious objector) discharged from the military, have said, "The challenge is not whether we can endure basic training or shoot straight between the eyes. Of course we could. The greater challenge is to act as women united for the ideals that

men and their clever weapons haven't brought us: security, peace, justice and equality for all."

**Myth:** Joining the military shows that you care for humanity.

**Fact:** While in college I talked with disillusioned Army nurses who had enlisted out of a sense of "patriotism." On the Vietnam battlefields they were ordered to care first for the wounded who could survive with minimal treatment so they could re-enter combat, thus leaving those more seriously wounded and who acutely needed care until last. Having gone to "fight man's inhumanity to man" they were confronted with it by their own officers.

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Both we in the public sector and those of us who are employed in education can counter militarism in the schools by placing counter-recruitment notebooks in the guidance offices of our school systems; by being present in counselors' offices to talk with interested students; by paying for ads in high school newspapers promoting "Peacemaker" careers; by encouraging receptive teachers to implement courses in values clarification, assertion training and conflict resolution. These programs emphasize nonviolence, egalitarianism and mutual aid in interpersonal and international problem solving and by educating students about costatus (many do not know it exists).

"Too busy," you say, "for such involvement?" If not you, then who?

Counter-recruitment materials can be ordered from the following sources: The American Friends Service Committee, 317 E. 25th Street, Baltimore, MD 21218, tel (301) 366-7200; The American Friends Service Committee, Attention: Betty Cole, 980 N. Fair Oaks Avenue, Pasadena, CA 91103, tel (213) 791-1978; CCCO (Central Committee for Conscientious Objectors), P.O. Box 15796, Philadelphia, PA 19103; Committee on Militarism in Education, Box 271, Nyack, NY 10960; Brethren Peace Fellowship, Box 415, New Windsor, MD 21776, tel (301) 775-2254.

*Connie Kreider is an elementary school teacher and active in the Fellowship of Reconciliation.*

## The Impact of Militarism on the Chinese Women's Movement

by Winifred Nelson Beechy

To be in China in 1980 is to find it incredible that women were completely dominated by a male-oriented family and social system in this century. The tortuous practice of foot-binding was perhaps symbolic of how women were bound to the hearth and private confines of the home; bound by the whims and desires of male authority figures—first father, then husband, and finally sons; bound to illiteracy and incompetence by traditional horror of an educated female. The occasional little old woman tottering along on tiny feet in new China is a reminder that this condition did actually exist less than 60 years ago.

The seeds of women's liberation were no doubt planted in the period of foreign imperialism. Much as

the exploitation and encroachment of Europe and the United States are to be condemned, it must be acknowledged that this opening of a window to the outside world did give Chinese women a glimpse of feminist activities, perhaps some small hope for a change in their own dismal existence.

Mission schools gave the first opportunity for the education of girls, often at the risk of estrangement of family and community. Foreign industries offered work in factories and a small degree of independence for women, even though it was in degrading sweat-shop conditions—completely unpraiseworthy. These small openings were seized by the most rebellious and daring Chinese women and girls. Thus a small start was made



early in the twentieth century which grew into an organized movement for women's rights.

Without claiming to be an expert on the subject, it seems to me that this movement has gone through four stages. (After two months in China it would be pretentious if not stupid to claim expertise on anything Chinese.) My impressions are based on observations, conversations and the reading of a study made by an Australian-born journalist on **Feminism and Socialism in China** (Elizabeth Croll, published by Routledge and Kegan Paul, London, 1978).

### 1. Militarism

The slow beginnings in education and economic independence was accelerated by the nationalist revolutions in the early part of the century and the Communist revolution which followed. As some American feminists are now apparently advocating Chinese women recognized that fighting war, heroism were highly valued by men; therefore, to prove their worth and capabilities equal to men, they enthusiastically joined the revolutionary effort by forming work or hospital units behind the lines, supporting husbands' enlistments by taking over farm work, participating in propaganda teams and guerrilla fighting. They also organized all-female combat units which were part of the revolutionary army. They were fighting, they thought, not only in defense of their country but in defense of feminist interests, for a new society which would grant equality of status and opportunity for all. Many died, acclaimed martyrs to this cause.

Militarism appeared to be successful in achieving women's goals. Revolutionary leaders gave them high praise, recognizing their invaluable assistance without which the revolution could not have succeeded. But they soon learned that after the glories of battle faded, conditions were less ideal than expected.

### 2. Employment

The second phase of the movement shifted emphasis to participation in the new socialist society as productive members. It was observed that women who held jobs outside the home and had some money of their own were not at the mercy of male family members. They were not bound to undesired marriages as a means of survival. The fact that they were productive partners in the economy raised their consciousness of their own worth. Perhaps this consciousness raising was the decisive factor at this state. It helped them to see that while they were now allowed to labor both at home and on the job, they were still not able to function on an equal footing with men.

### 3. Politics

The emphasis then shifted to a political struggle for legal rights and a share in decision-making. Chinese women organized into "women's associations" to bring to bear their collective clout. Many became active Party workers, especially on the local and county levels. But married women found a politically active role difficult unless their husbands cooperated with child care. At

times, recalcitrant husbands were called to account by actions or threats of the women's associations.

This strategy of working through politics did effect changes in policies and laws. Women gained the right to vote, the right to inherit, the right to hold property in their own names, the right to sue for divorce (formerly allowed to men only), and to receive child support. The new marriage laws are considered to be a real victory for women.

### 4. Education

But currently one might say that the emphasis is focusing on education. Knowledgeable and sensitive women, while proud of China's achievements in both socialism and feminism, are aware that there must be a change in attitudes of both women and men in order to bring about true equality.

A casual observer will note many evidences of equality and some inequality. Women have gained the right to hard labor as indicated by the many who wield pick and shovel on construction sights; women pushing or pulling back-breaking loads on hand carts; women doing all kinds of farm labor including the handling of a heavy plow pulled by water buffalo. Women are driving trucks and buses. But it seems that the more skilled jobs are done by men, the more technical or heavy equipment is operated by men, the chiefs and heads of departments are more often men.

Women keep their own names at marriage, are often assigned jobs without regard to spouses' assignments. It is noted, however, that when jobs call for separate living arrangements, it is the mother who has the responsibility for the children. Housework has been minimized by child care centers and central dining halls at many places of employment. Yet what remains to be done in the home is too often woman's work even though she is as fully employed outside the home as her husband.

All this points up the reason for the present emphasis on education for necessary inner change, following previous attempts at effecting change through participation in the military, in productive work and in political action.

To sum up the impact of militarism on the Chinese women's movement in the past, we note that while military service gave an early impetus to change, it was found to be insufficient and without long-term significance. At present it seems not to be a major factor in women's advancement. While one sees many young women in uniform, I have been unable to get an estimate of the percentage of women in the all-volunteer army. We are told that the standards are high and that acceptance is something of a status achievement similar to being able to get into a college. But the Chinese army apparently is involved in many non-military services so it is difficult to determine the actual role of the women in uniform.

Nevertheless, women in China are affected by the modern military madness as are women universally. While hopes for development and modernization are



high, it must be admitted that the needs are great. Women need more adequate housing, better education for their children, more job opportunities and training and more consumer goods to ease their daily tasks. A national budget which puts a reasonable priority on defense as only **one of the many** demands on its resources is necessary if China's citizens are to attain their dreams for personal fulfillment and a higher standard of living.

There is a thread of anti-war sentiment in Chinese classical literature with some famous poets depicting war's especially devastating effects on the lives of women. Modern Chinese like to think of themselves as a peace-loving nation. Whether women have been

sufficiently liberated to speak out against militarism remains to be seen.

Elise Boulding in her scholarly book **The Underside of History** (Westview, 1976) points out that repeatedly through the centuries "women have done the invisible work of reconstruction and repair for warring male societies." Perhaps the time has now come for women to be a force in the prevention or conversion of a militarized society. (26 October 1980, Chengdu, China)

*Winifred Beechy, Goshen, Ind., is Peace and Social Concerns coordinator for the Mennonite Church. From September to December 1980 she was in Chengdu, China, serving as co-director of Goshen College's study-service trimester there. She has three children and five grandchildren.*

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international law and the Nuremburg principles. For use in anti-war, anti-nuclear civil disobedience or war/tax resistance defense. Price \$1. Order from: Center on Law and Pacifism, Box 1584, Colorado Springs, CO 80901.

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**Announcement:** Dollars are needed to help Asian, African and Latin American women get to Mennonite World Conference general council in Nairobi next summer. See article on page 11.

## From a Letter Written to American Mennonite Women:

(Mid-May 1980)...This has been a pilgrimage out of pain, heart's agony for our boys, enquiry so that we could discover God's will, and much prayer so that we could be renewed and filled with God's peace and acceptance.... We see this [experience] as a kind of "calling" and we feel privileged in the rather special nature of our position as mothers of sons in detention for their conscience' sake, totally alien in surroundings given over to thoughts and actions of war....The best way for "prison" to become a "powerhouse" is to identify the meaning behind the experience, to study what shaped and influenced our boys in the Christian walk and what inspired their commitment to people and their needs.

and to respond in a new and deeper way in our own personal commitment to God. Peace flooded into our hearts when we totally accepted what our sons were doing and the consequences of their actions....Acceptance made the act of honest relinquishment of our boys into the hands of God a much easier task. We can dare to believe that God loves these boys even more than we do....May God bless you and hold you in His love.—Beryl Moll and Dorothy Steele, mothers of Peter Moll and Richard Steele, South African Baptists imprisoned for registering as conscientious objectors to war.

Come to the 1981 "Women in Ministry" conference. From five o'clock Friday afternoon, March 27, until noon on Sunday the 29th, there is a wide variety of content available to participants. Cost of the conference is a \$10 registration fee; meals for Saturday and Sunday cost \$9.75; for Saturday only, \$7.50. Lodging in local homes will be free. Child care is available if you state your needs before the conference. For registration or more information, contact Rosie Epp, 654 S. Chautauqua, Wichita, KS 67211. Rather than establishing a travel fund, planners recommend that churches provide funds to send representatives to the conference. Scheduled workshops are: Women in Seminary led by Dorothy Yoder Nyce; Women Learning Leadership Skills, Tina Block Ediger; Peace Issues for Women, Carole Hull; Have Mennonites Sold Out to Consumerism?, LaVonne Platt; Interpreting Scripture: Why Can't We Agree?, Harold Dyck; Two Career Marriages, Randy and Becky Basinger; Coping With Depression, Sue Kruger; Developing a Strong Self Image in Traditional Women's Roles, Verla Dick; Interpreting Difficult New Testament Passages, Frank Keller; History of Women in Religion, Herta Funk; MCC Task Force on Women in Church and Society; Legal Questions for Women, Karen Griffiths; Simple Hospitality, Sara Janzen Regier; Sexism in Language, Karen Goering Hostetler; The Pastoral Ministry for Women, Emma Richards; Over Forty and Nothing to Do, Ann Schowalter; Women and Men Working Together in Church Institutions, Marilyn Klaus and Lois Bergen; Men and Masculinity, Perry and Elizabeth Yoder.

*Peggy and Jim Shelton* are now officially designated co-pastors—of the Lakeview Mennonite Brethren Church in Chicago. This acknowledges work that she has already been doing in visitation and Christian education planning.

*Ruth Brunk Stoltzfus*, Harrisonburg Va., is featured in an article by Jennifer Halteman in *Daughters of Sarah*, November-December 1980 (2716 W. Cortland, Chicago, IL 60647).

*Jean Schrag* has been chosen chair of the Student and Young Adult Services (a program of Mennonite Board of Missions) committee for Washington, D.C.

*JoEllen Goertz Koerner*, Freeman, S.D., was named South Dakota's Outstanding Young Woman of the Year for 1980. She is director of Freeman Junior College's practical nursing program.

The Indiana Committee for the Humanities has awarded \$16,515 to "Pattern for Living: A Program for Women," a 12-course continuing education series at Goshen College and Oaklawn Center. The grant reduces course fees, assists in speaker costs, and assists in publication of participants' contributions. Courses have included: "Womanhood in America," "Assertiveness Training," "Journal Writing," "Beyond Sexual Myths," "Women's Spirituality: Search for Self and Society," "Managing the Changed Roles of Men and Women in the '80s," and "Communication in the Family." *Shirley H. Showalter* and *Rebecca Pigott* give leadership to the series. Both women and men can enroll.

*Alva Myrdal*, Swedish diplomat, was awarded the Albert Einstein Peace Prize of \$50,000 on May 29, 1980. She is the author of *The Game of Disarmament: How the United States and Russia Run the Arms Race* (paperback, \$5.95).

The MCC Peace Section Task Force on Women in Church and Society will next convene on 27 March 1981 in North Newton, Kan., just prior to the Women in Ministry Conference. Members are Bertha Beachey, Goshen, Ind. (Mennonite Church, 1981); Mary Dueck, Fresno, Calif. (Mennonite Brethren, 1981); Rosie Epp, Wichita, Kan. (General Conference Mennonite, 1982); Martha Smith Good, New Hamburg, Ont. (Mennonite Church, 1983); Edith Krause, Vancouver, B.C. (General Conference Mennonite, 1982); and Elsa Redekop, Winnipeg, Man. (Mennonite Brethren, 1981).

*Nancy S. and James M. Lapp* have been chosen to head the Goshen College campus ministries department. Nancy (a former member of the MCC Task Force on Women in Church and Society) will be campus minister, and James will direct campus ministries.

A November conference in Hutchinson, Kan., provided a forum for people to talk about peace and conflict resolution. "Causeway for Peace," with featured speaker *Margaret Sonnenday*, explored peace-building practices. Sponsors were Kansas Church Women United, the peace committee of Eden Mennonite Church near Moundridge, Women's International League for Peace and Freedom, and several non-denominational groups.

"There seems to be a serious absence of female leadership and utilization of appropriate gifts within the church," says Philadelphia Student and Young Adult Services director *Sharon Detweller*. The concern focused in an October seminar at University of Pennsylvania on "Women in the Mennonite Church." The Women's Missionary and Service Commission helped fund the event.

The number of first-professional degrees in medicine, law and other fields awarded to women increased tenfold in the past decade, the National Center for Education Statistics for the 1978-79 academic year show that 16,313 women earned first-professional degrees, up from 1,612 a decade earlier.—*Lincoln (NE) Journal*, 5 November 1980.

*Joan Gerig*, *Orlando Redekopp* (Winnipeg), and *Suzanne Lind* (Scottdale, Pa.) spent four months in 1980 researching South Africa's practice of "resettlement," the government term for moving black South Africans from their homes to places designated by the government. The goal is to find ways in which Mennonite Central Committee can help those being uprooted, and to tell the world of this situation. A study packet on South Africa resettlement is available from MCC (21 South 12th Street, Akron, Pa., 17501) for \$.50. After itinerating in the United States and Canada for three months, Joan Gerig and Orlando Redekopp report: "Repeatedly we heard the phrase, 'South Africa will explode if it continues on its present course.' Recalling our emphasis that South Africa focuses for us all the



major issues of the day, the conclusion was sobering. The earth has enough for all; but we need a new vision of how that reality might be incarnated in a world that moves in another direction. The courage to take risks, to step outside the normal way of doing things, and to trust God to bring us to a just view of creation, these were our prayers."

#### **Forty-five Women Delegates Invited to MWC General Council; Dollars Needed**

The Mennonite World Conference Executive Committee has authorized expanded sessions of the MWC General Council meeting in Nairobi, summer 1981. In addition to the General Council members, the following will be invited: 45 women delegates appointed by member conferences of MWC (15 from North America and Europe; 15 from Asia, Central and South America, Central and West Africa; 10 from Eastern Africa; five from Kenya), other interested women and spouses as guests, the International Mennonite Peace Committee, and moderators of conferences affiliated with MWC.

Mennonite World Conference travel fund hopes to be able to cover all the costs of the 30 women delegates from Asia, Africa, Central and South America. Whether those 30 women can attend or not depends on fund raising efforts between now and next summer.

The Task Force on Women has appointed Bertha Beachy to represent the Task Force. Consider helping to make it possible for Bertha as well as Asian, African or Latin American woman to be present in Nairobi. Send contributions marked "MWC Travel Fund for Women" to Ron Flickinger, Mennonite Central Committee Peace Section, 21 South 12th Street, Akron, Pa., 17501. Two-thirds of the contributions will be forwarded to the MWC Travel Fund and one-third will help cover Bertha Beachy's expenses.

Phyllis Bixler, assistant professor of English at Kansas State University, has won the 1980 award of the Children's Literature Association for outstanding work in literary criticism published during 1979. Phyllis was 1979-80 Humanities Lecturer for the Association of Christian Colleges in Kansas.

A "Feminism and Faith Conference" for "committed Christian feminist women convened January 16-18 in LaVerne, Calif. Sponsoring church body was the Church of the Brethren.

**Change** (62 Chandos Place, London WC2, United Kingdom) is being founded to research and publish reports on the condition and status of women all over the world. The first issue featured "Economic Development and Women's Place—Women in Singapore" by Aline S. Wong. A forthcoming issue will deal with "Military Ideology and the Dissolution of Democracy—Women in Chile." Subscription cost is U.S. \$15 for five issues or individual copies for \$3.

After 230 hours of hearings in 12 cities, a National Academy of Peace and Conflict Resolution has received firm recommendation. The **Eagle-Beacon** (Wichita, Kan.) editorialized: "Should a peace academy be established, it would be faced with tasks of monumental

stature, but at least a start will have been made toward addressing the challenge of making peace something more than the simple absence of war." Elise Boulding (only woman on the nine-member commission appointed to explore the need for such a peace academy) suggests: Write for a copy of the proposal and offer feedback; the address of the commission is William Spencer, Director, 2100 M St., N.W., Suite 714, Washington, D.C. 20037. Write your own Congress-people and say that you have heard about the work of the commission and ask to be informed of details.

*Mary Mae Schwartzentruber*, Kitchener, Ont., was installed as associate pastor of Stirling Avenue Mennonite Church in November 1980. The pastoral team is made up of her, *Vernon Leis*, and *Brenda Weber*.

*Norma Goering* has compiled a bibliography of peace materials for educators. To obtain a copy write to her in Hesston, Kan., 67062.

*Margaret Wiebe* has been named to the nominating committee and *Karen Neufeld* elected to the Christian Education Commission of the Southern District of the Mennonite Brethren Conference.

*Anna Juhnke* was chosen vice-chair and *Frances Greaser* was elected to the executive committee of Mennonite Central Committee U.S., this at the November meeting in Chicago.

*Melinda Nickel* spoke at "Women's Day on Campus" at Tabor College, Hillsboro, Kan., November 8. Her subject: "Women Facing Change."

If you have news and/or verbs that you would like to share with the 1,300 readers of *Report*, send them to me at 4830 Woodland Ave., Lincoln, NE 68516.—*Muriel Thiessen Stackley*

#### **1981 Women in Ministry Conference** **Theme: Whole Women Ministering to a Whole World** **Friday evening, March 27, 5 p.m.**

##### **Registration**

##### **Worship**

**Dotty Janzen, keynote speaker**

**Saturday morning, March 28**

##### **Workshops**

**Saturday afternoon**

**Dotty Janzen, speaker**

**Small group discussions**

**Plenary session; reporting**

**Special interest groups**

**Saturday evening**

**Bethel College readers' theater**

**Marie Snider, speaker**

**Fellowship**

**Sunday morning**

**Evaluation**

**Worship led by Emma Richards**

**Communion**

**Dismissal after noon meal**

Dear Muriel: If I didn't have such high regard for the MCC Peace Section Task Force Women in Church and Society *Report*, I'd never be objecting to a few lines in the November-December issue! But, I do hold the *Report* in esteem, see it as leading the way in our churches, enjoy reading the variety of articles, and I feel **very negative** about reading words like these: "Possible advice to other women seeking to achieve a successful melding of family and business? 'Make sure,' says Esther, 'that you are in total agreement with your husband in this. And then don't ever let him feel that you are more important or in any way superior.'" Certainly that is a quotation from the interview, but should it be included? Among Christians, who (man or woman) should act as if he/she were "more important or in any way superior" to any other person? Thanks for hearing my concern.—*Margaret Foth, Harrisonburg, Va. (December 8).*

Dear Muriel: I am a first year Master of Divinity student at the Mennonite Brethren Biblical Seminary. I have been doing my best to find as much information as I can about women in the ministry. By chance today, I saw the September-October issue of *Report*. I had no idea such a task force or publication was available. I am delighted! I am continually being made aware of how much work has been done by the church on behalf of women. Personally, I am very grateful for all the work that women have done before me. My life as it is today would not be possible without it. Please enter my subscription to *Report*. I would like two copies if that is possible. I would like to share one with my pastor....—*Marilyn Peters, Fresno, Calif. (18 November 1980).*

Dear Editor: What a joy it was to receive *Report* no33 on "Women and Leadership." I had spent a good many hours since last evening reflecting on a congregational meeting which I had helped to lead. Alternately I chastised myself for exercising leadership and on the other hand struggled to accept the consequences of the

gifts I bring to our congregation. When I read [in *Report*], "A key task for women involved in leadership development is to retain hope—to persevere through the risks of involvement," I was literally filled with hope again....—*Marlene Kropf, Portland, Ore. (3 November 1980).*

Dear Muriel: What a breath of fresh air *Report* brings each time it arrives. I soak up every word like a dry sponge. Thanks to the women whose zeal it is to make females equal partners in Christ.—*Leann Toews, Newton, Kan. (11 November 1980).*

## Looking Ahead

Forthcoming *Reports* will focus on:

Mentors and Role Models for Mennonite Women. March-April 1981. Katie Funk Wiebe, coordinator.

Mennonite Women Writers. May-June 1981. Elsa Redekopp, coordinator.

The Minister's Spouse. July-August 1981. Martha Smith Good, coordinator.

Discipleship Motives in Career Choices. September-October 1981. Edith Krause, coordinator.

Singleness and Single Parenting. November-December 1981. Bertha Beachy, coordinator.

Are you aware of written or audio-visual resources on these topics? We would like to mention them in *Report*. Have you (or do you know someone who has) been researching or writing on these topics, particularly as they relate to peace issues, Mennonites, Brethren in Christ, the Christian church? What actions have been taken in these areas in your community or by your congregation?

Send all such information to Editor, *Report*, 4830 Woodland Ave., Lincoln, Neb., 68516.

The *Report* is a bi-monthly publication of the MCC Peace Section Task Force on Women in Church and Society. Correspondence should be sent to Editor Muriel Thiessen Stackley, 4830 Woodland, Lincoln, NE 68516.

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